

Regulations for the trade of Masons.

30 Edward III. A.D. 1356. Letter-Book G. fol. xli. (Latin and Norman French.)

([fn. 1](#)) At a congregation of the Mayor and Aldermen, holden on the Monday next before the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary [2 February], in the 30th year of the reign of King Edward the Third etc., there being present, Simon Fraunceys, the Mayor, John Lovekyn, and other Aldermen, the Sheriffs, and John Little, Symon de Benyngtone, and William de Holbeche, Commoners, certain Articles were ordained touching the trade of Masons, in these words.—

([fn. 2](#)) "Whereas Simon Fraunceys, Mayor of the City of London, has been given to understand that divers dissensions and disputes have been moved in the said city between the masons who are hewers, on the one hand, and the light masons and setters on the other; because that their trade has not been regulated in due manner, by the government of folks of their trade, in such form as other trades are; therefore the said Mayor, for maintaining the peace of our Lord the King, and for allaying such manner of dissensions and disputes, and for nurturing love among all manner of folks, in honour of the said city, and for the profit of the common people, by assent and counsel of the Aldermen and Sheriffs, caused all the good folks of the said trade to be summoned before him, to have from them good and due information how their trade might be best ordered and ruled, for the profit of the common people.

"Whereupon, the good folks of the said trade chose from among themselves twelve of the most skilful men of their trade, to inform the Mayor, Aldermen, and Sheriffs, as to the acts and articles touching their said trade, that is to say;—Walter de Sallynge, Richard de Sallynge, Thomas de Bredone, John de Tyryngtone, Thomas de Gloucestre, and Henry de Yeevelee, on behalf of the masons hewers; Richard Joye, Simon de Bartone, John de Estone, John Wylot, Thomas Hardegray, and Richard de Cornewaylle, on behalf of the light masons and setters; the which folks were sworn before the aforesaid Mayor, Aldermen, and Sheriffs; in manner as follows.—

"In the first place,—that every man of the trade may work at any work touching the trade, if he be perfectly skilled and knowing in the same.

"Also,—that good folks of the said trade shall be chosen and sworn every time that need shall be, to oversee that no one of the trade takes work to complete, if he does not well and perfectly know how to perform such work; on pain of losing, to the use of the Commonalty, the first time that he shall by the persons so sworn be convicted thereof, one mark; and the second time, two marks; and the third time, he shall forswear the trade, for ever.

"Also,—that no one shall take work in gross, ([fn. 3](#)) if he be not of ability in a proper manner to complete such work; and he who wishes to undertake such work in gross, shall come to the good man of whom he has taken such work to do and complete, and shall bring with him six or four ancient men of his trade, sworn thereunto, if they are prepared to testify unto the good man of whom he has taken such work to do, that he is skilful and of ability to perform such work, and that if he shall fail to complete such work in due manner, or not be of ability to do the same, they themselves, who so testify that he is skilful and of ability to finish the work, are bound to

complete the same work well and properly at their own charges, in such manner as he undertook; in case the employer who owns the work shall have fully paid the workman. ([fn. 4](#)) And if the employer shall then owe him any thing, let him pay it to the persons who have so undertaken for him to complete such work.

"Also,—that no one shall set an apprentice or journeyman to work, except in presence of his master, before he has been perfectly instructed in his calling: and he who shall do the contrary, and by the persons so sworn be convicted thereof, let him pay, the first time, to the use of the Commonalty, half a mark, and the second time, one mark, and the third time, 20 shillings; and so let him pay 20 shillings every time that he shall be convicted thereof.

"Also,—that no one of the said trade shall take an apprentice for a less term than seven years, according to the usage of the City; and he who shall do to the contrary thereof, shall be punished in the same manner.

"Also,—that the said Masters, so chosen, shall oversee that all those who work by the day shall take for their hire according as they are skilled, and may deserve for their work, and not outrageously.

"Also,—if any one of the said trade will not be ruled or directed in due manner by the persons of his trade sworn thereunto, such sworn persons are to make known his name unto the Mayor; and the Mayor, by assent of the Aldermen and Sheriffs, shall cause him to be chastised by imprisonment and other punishment; that so, other rebels may take example by him, to be ruled by the good folks of their trade.

"Also,—that no one of the said trade shall take the apprentice or journeyman of another, to the prejudice or damage of his master, until his term shall have fully expired; on pain of paying, to the use of the Commonalty, half a mark, each time that he shall be convicted thereof."

- 1 In Latin.
- 2 In French.
- 3 Wholesale, or by contract.
- 4 Meaning, the contractor.

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